

Major Arcana: The Fool

by Azii

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Summary: "Still, sometimes, even the most inventive of Nice's ideas can't keep the darkness at bay. On those nights, Art wonders if he's a fool on the precipice, a hair's breadth from crossing the line."
Nice/Art

Major Arcana: The Fool

This fandom needs more fics! And while my tripe isn't exactly what's needed, I'll contribute what I can to the proliferation of the Hamatora archive. Also, understand this was written after episode 6 but before episode 7.

Addendum: I'm going to pretend that episode 7 didn't happen.

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><p>"You're going to hell for laughing, Art."<p>

"That's not very nice, Nice," the police inspector says calmly, his mirthful violet irises barely following the supersonic movements of his interlocutor. Nice has been running laps around the headquarters track for the better part of the afternoon— all part of a Forensics Department "experiment" on high velocity air friction and abrasion.

Nice will need several new boxes of bandages when he's done— but at least he won't be starving. Despite the threat of eternal damnation, Art can't fight the smile emerging on his lips. Facultas Academy's top student, their touted genius, the pupil whose abilities so far exceed the rest that his very existence is classified— that former student is a hapless, broke private investigator who holds office hours at a not-quite-seedy cafe. He watches the other man as he snaps himself from place to place, the bright afternoon sun glinting off his auburn locks and the heat of the season making his t-shirt stick

to his skin.

Sometimes, it's difficult to feel any jealousy towards his feckless idiot of a friend.

Sometimes, however, it's far too easy to envy the other's intellect or physical prowess, and most especially the fact that he's a Minimum Holder.

Sometimes, late at night, when the two are tangled in bed sheets and moonbeams and each other, Art feels something other than lust creeping through his limbs, licking fire along his spine and causing his fingers to dig so forcefully into the other man's flesh that they leave tiny red crescents along a tanned back. The sensation washes over him, dark and ominous, and when it's had its way, Art finds himself considering how marvelous it might be to watch the life drain from Nice's sapphire eyes. He always reaches for his lover with increased desperation on these occasions, hoping that the feel of the prodigy's lips against his own will exorcise his demons.

Sometimes it works.

When it doesn't, he keeps his distance from the PI for several days, hoping that performing his duties as an investigator will help reestablish the boundaries that have become more difficult to maintain of late: good/evil, hero/villain, and friend/enemy.

Nice never inquires after the abrupt distancing. He merely acquiesces to Art's invitation without fuss when it eventually comes, characteristically unconcerned about the state of their relationship.

Sometimes Nice's carefree attitude is the most infuriating thing Art has ever experienced.

"What's wrong?" the brunet asks, finally coming to rest after innumerable circles around the track. He pants heavily, hands against his knees and head bowed in exhaustion. "You just zoned out all of a sudden."

"Why would you think something's wrong?" Art asks coolly. Nice does not need to be made privy to his recent ruminations.

A laugh. "You're not a difficult read," the Minimum Holder says around labored breaths. "I can always tell when something's wrong."

"It's this new murder case," the blond-haired detective lies smoothly. "It's sicker than the usual fare."

There's an instant when something sinister flashes in azure eyes, but it's fleeting and Art swallows the sinking sensation of dread attendant to it. "If you don't want to tell me, you don't have to," replies Nice, breath even now, and a thinly-veiled challenge underscoring his words.

"It's not like that."

"Then how is it?"

Art sighs wearily. They'll circumlocute for hours if he permits. Secretly, he believes that Nice gets off on tormenting him thusly. Actually, Nice gets off on a great many things. Art would know. "It's Professor Moral," he offers after several moments. "And you."

"And me?" the brunet wonders. "What about me?"

"You said that the two of you are alike. What did you mean by that, exactly?" Art isn't sure he wants the truth.

Nice's resultant smile is unnerving, like he's seen too much. "Is that why you go off on your own for days on end? Because you think you're sleeping with a would-be serial killer?"

The fair-skinned man massages the bridge of his nose in exasperation. _Is everything a joke to you?_ "Something like that." Another lie. _It's more like _you're _sleeping with a would-be killer._

"I only meant that both of us tend towards the things that we find entertaining. For him, it's killing people and taunting the policeâ€|"

"For you?"

"For me it's stopping people like him and taunting the police," Nice says with a wicked leer. "â€|.in other ways." And then he does just that, stripping off his sweaty t-shirt and giving Art an uninterrupted view.

"A for effort."

Sometimes, Nice can be serious. He turns grave now in response to the lingering doubt clouding heliotrope orbs. "Listen, Art. I know what I said, and I meant it. That bastard and I have a lot in common. But I could never be him," the PI states, voice turning hard. "I have a conscience." And before anyone can register the movement, he presses a swift, chaste kiss to Art's cheek. "You."

"About thatâ€|." Sometimes honesty is not the best policy, Art realizes.

But sometimes it is.

Midnight eyes level on him, their expression open and gentle, and he understands in that instant that Nice will never flee from his demons, will never fear his darkness, will never reject him. He shares much in common with monsters, after all. "What did Moral say to you?" the brunet queries.

"That I'm envious of you," Art confesses. He's not surprised that Nice knows what had transpired.

Those arresting eyes go wide with astonishment, but the private eye's affect is sincere.

"That I hate you sometimes for your brilliance and talent. That sometimes I wishâ€|" Art falters. "I wishâ€|"

"You wish you could hurt me?" Nice dispenses with tact altogether. Again, Art finds himself unamazed by his lover's nonpareil

insightfulness. _Facultas Academy's top graduate, right?_

Sometimes silence is deafening. Doubtless, Nice knows that better than anyone.

Sometimes it's not. The brunet nearly doubles over in laughter, startling his companion and sending irritation coursing through his veins. "Enough!" Art snaps, "I don't know why I bothered telling you in the first place." He strides away, only to be stilled by the other man's fingers wrapping around his wrist.

"Being jealous isn't the same as being evil, you know. You may fantasize about it," he declares, "but you'd never really hurt me."

"You don't know that," Art counters.

"You've had me at your mercy countless times. Asleep in your bed, even. And you've done nothing." A stalling hand flies over the investigator's mouth, stemming his forthcoming protest. Nice's smile lengthens in impish delight. "But if you want to put that whip-smart mind of _yours_ to making fantasies a reality, then I'm sure we can come up with some... interesting ways to channel your violent fetishes."

Several breath's lengths pass as Art contemplates the implications of the brunet's latest scheme. And then his lips curve in a smirk that matches his lover's.

Sometimes, the blond doesn't resent the other's genius at all. Sometimes, he relishes it.

Still, sometimes, even the most inventive of Nice's ideas can't keep the darkness at bay. On those nights, Art wonders if he's a fool on the precipice, a hair's breadth from crossing the line.

* * *

><p>NB on 'The Fool': The fool card is indicative of a person who is, like Art, on the edge of calamity and has no idea that they are thusly situated. Given Moral's spot-on analysis of Art, I'd say the good inspector has some demons in dire need of exorcism.<p>

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><p>I took some liberties here. Namely the following:<p>

(1) I read somewhere that Nice is immune to air friction. Sue me.

(2) I'm not sure if Art knows that Nice is Facultad Academy's top student, although I suspect that he knows how utterly brilliant Nice is.

(3) I don't even know if this pairing "works" but damn if they don't look really cute together.

End
file.